

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Karen P. Hewitt***

For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U.S. Attorney Luella M. Caldito (619)557-7035

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - April 7, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Pedro Sanchez-Espinoza and Roy Jack Bonilla were each sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by the Honorable Roger T. Benitez to serve 78 months in custody. Judge Benitez also ordered that Sanchez-Espinoza and Bonilla serve a three-year term of supervised release following their release from prison.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Luella M. Caldito and John B. Owens, who prosecuted the case, the defendants were part of a sophisticated alien smuggling organization that smuggled illegal aliens into the United States from Mexico. On January 18, 2007, Sanchez-Espinoza was driving a Ford Escort in tandem with a white van, initially driven by Bonilla, on Interstate 8 near Boulevard, California. At approximately 9:00 p.m. that evening, the defendants delivered the van to a location on the shoulder of Interstate 8. Bonilla exited the van and entered Sanchez-Espinoza's vehicle. Immediately thereafter, approximately twenty individuals ran from the bushes on the shoulder of the interstate and into the van.

Border Patrol agents followed both the van and the defendants' vehicle. The van traveled over 100 miles per hour before pulling over to the right shoulder of Interstate 8. Many of the aliens attempted to jump

out of the van. One of the smuggled aliens observed the driver place the van back into the drive position and turn the steering wheel to the right immediately before the van dropped approximately 100 feet down a steep slope. As the van rolled down the embankment, it ran over a female alien who had previously jumped out of the van. The van eventually came to a stop when it crashed into a rock. Border Patrol agents found the female lying face down near the van with tire marks across her lower back. The female was transported to Sharp Medical Hospital where she was treated for her injuries. Approximately ten aliens were apprehended and stated that they had arranged to pay \$1200 - \$1800 to be smuggled into the United States from Mexico.

Sanchez-Espinoza and Bonilla were arrested near the crash site. At the time of his arrest, Sanchez-Espinoza was in possession of a spare key to the van that picked up and transported the illegal aliens. In addition to the January 18, 2007 episode, the defendants were involved in numerous previous alien smuggling incidents.

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 07CR0217-BEN

Pedro Sanchez-Espinoza

Roy Jack Bonilla

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to Bring In Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain - Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens - Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) and (v)(I).

Bringing In Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain and Aiding and Abetting - Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

Transportation of Illegal Aliens and Aiding and Abetting - Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2.

INVESTIGATING AGENCY

United States Border Patrol